

260558Z Nov 01

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ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	USNW-00	DODE-00	DS-00	EUR-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
	LAB-01	VCE-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	BBG-00
	IIP-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/004W	
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0365  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS HARARE 003533

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX, ROBERTSON, SCHLACHTER, AF/S KRAFT, AF/P,  
INR/R/MR, NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ZI PREL PHUM

SUBJECT: HERALD WARNS OF U.S.-ZIMBABWE "DIPLOMATIC ROW"

1. THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY "THE HERALD" PUBLISHED A PAGE-ONE STORY ON NOVEMBER 23 ASSERTING THAT A "DIPLOMATIC ROW" WAS IMMINENT BETWEEN THE US AND ZIMBABWE. THE SUBJECT OF THE "ROW" IS A "LETTER" THE US SENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) IN PROTEST OF "WIDESPREAD BEATING OF WHITES AND OTHERS IN RETALIATION TO THE ABDUCTION, TORTURE AND MURDER OF NATIONAL HERO CDE CAIN NKALA." THE ARTICLE ALSO SPECULATED THAT THE GOZ WOULD SUMMON AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN TO PROTEST THE LETTER "AS THERE WAS NO INDISCRIMINATE BEATING OF PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY."
2. THE ARTICLE QUOTES AN UNNAMED GOZ SPOKESMAN WHO BLAMES HARARE-BASED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS FOR "FALSE AND ALARMIST REPORTS" AND FOR "GROSS AND OBSCENE MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS" THAT LED THE US GOVERNMENT TO BELIEVE THERE WERE PROBLEMS IN ZIMBABWE. THE ARTICLE NAMES 5 REPORTERS IN ZIMBABWE WHO REPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS.
3. EXCERPTS FOLLOW: "THE U.S. YESTERDAY SENT A LETTER OF PROTEST TO THE GOVERNMENT ALLEGING THAT THERE WERE WIDESPREAD BEATINGS OF WHITES AND OTHERS IN RETALIATION TO THE ABDUCTION, TORTURE AND MURDER OF NATIONAL HERO CAIN NKALA. THE LETTER IS, HOWEVER, LIKELY TO TRIGGER A DIPLOMATIC FURORE BETWEEN HARARE AND WASHINGTON AS IT WAS SUSPECTED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS WERE BASED ON WIDESPREAD FALSE MEDIA REPORTS BY SOME HARARE-BASED OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENTS. DIPLOMATIC SOURCES TOLD "THE HERALD" LAST NIGHT THAT HARARE COULD REACT BY SUMMONING THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ZIMBABWE JOSEPH SULLIVAN AS THERE WAS NO INDISCRIMINATE BEATING OF PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY. THE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE AMERICANS HAD TAKEN AS AUTHENTIC, FALSE AND ALARMIST REPORTS BY FOREIGN MEDIA CORRESPONDENTS BASED IN HARARE. .A  
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GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN COULD NOT CONFIRM OR DENY RECEIVING THE PROTEST LETTER FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BUT SAID IF RECEIVED, IT WOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE USUAL MANNER THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

4. THE SPOKESMAN HOWEVER, CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF GROSS MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS BY HARARE-BASED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. 'WE ARE AWARE AND WE ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROSS AND OBSCENE MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS BY THE SO-CALLED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND IN PARTICULAR JAN RAATH (TIMES OF LONDON AND THE OBSERVER, LONDON), ANDREW MELDRUM (THE GUARDIAN, THE ECONOMIST AND THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE MONITOR), PETA THORNYCROFT (VOA AND THE TELEGRAPH, LONDON), ANGUS SHAW (ASSOCIATED PRESS), RICHARD CARVER (GEMINI FEATURES, MEDIA MONITORING UNIT, SOUTH AFRICA), AND ASSISTED BY THE LIKES OF BASILDON PETA (THE FINANCIAL GAZETTE, ZIMBABWE, AND THE INDEPENDENT, LONDON) AND DUMISANI MULEYA (THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT, ZIMBABWE AND THE SUNDAY AND SUNDAY STANDARD, SOUTH AFRICA). IT IS NOW AN OPEN SECRET THAT THESE REPORTERS ARE NOT ONLY DISTORTING THE FACTS BUT ARE ASSISTING TERRORISTS WHO STAND ACCUSED IN OUR COURTS OF LAW OF

ABDUCTION, TORTURE AND MURDER BY COVERING UP AND  
MISREPRESENTING THE BRUTAL DEEDS OF THE TERRORISTS.'  
THE SPOKESMAN SAID IF IT WAS TRUE THAT THE AMERICANS HAD  
SENT A LETTER OF PROTEST 'THEN THAT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE  
BECAUSE THEY HAVE AN EMBASSY HERE AND AN AMBASSADOR AND  
ARE THEREFORE IN A POSITION TO KNOW FIRST HAND THAT MDC  
(MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE) TERRORISTS HAVE  
ABDUCTED, TORTURED AND MURDERED THEIR PERCEIVED  
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POLITICAL OPPONENTS.' THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE U.S.  
EMBASSY HAD NO REASON OR EXCUSE TO RELY ON THE FALSE  
REPORTS BY CORRESPONDENTS. '